



## THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUG. 3, 2006

### CONTACT:

DR. TOMMY LEWIS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
DEPARTMENT OF DINÉ EDUCATION  
BOX 670  
WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515  
928.871.7617

# Department of Diné Education Superintendent of Schools issues statement to correct inaccurate newspaper headline

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Dr. Tommy Lewis, Superintendent of Schools for the Department of Diné Education, has released the following statement in response to an August 1, 2006, Gallup Independent article headlined “Feds refuse to lift suspension of Head Start.”

“The title of the article is very misleading. The Feds, which means the Head Start Bureau from Washington, did not refuse to lift the suspension. Rather, the Head Start Bureau requests a clarification from the Navajo Head Start on information that was sent to them a week ago.

Last weekend, a core group of Navajo Head Start and Department of Diné Education staff worked with individuals from the American Indian Technical Assistance Network and Valerie Pels-Kohout, Program Specialist with ACF, to compile the required documents as requested to partially lift the summary suspension. The following actions were completed:

- A 30-Day Quality Improvement Plan was developed to clarify staffing, timeframe, and cost of meeting the health and safety deficiencies of those centers that should be opening for classroom instruction.
- A start-up budget will be submitted this week. It will include a matrix that details the staff who have cleared background checks, the facilities that will be opened and ready for children, the buses that are ready to transport children, and the number of children that will be enrolled. Specific costs will be identified for each of those categories. The budget will also include all operational costs for start up.
- A letter was faxed to Ms. Pels-Kohout from the Navajo Nation to request an extension for the 30-day health and safety deficiencies until Sept. 15, 2006, and an extension for submission of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) until Sept. 1, 2006.

The Navajo Head Start received notice Monday that the extension requests were approved by the Head Start Bureau. This will ensure that the deficiencies cited will be corrected and that funding will be released to start up the program again.

The response to the 30-day health and safety deficiencies will include an action plan for each item. A budget was included to cross-reference the start-up budget. Many of the tasks to bring the deficiencies into compliance will require start-up money. This will be submitted by Sept. 15, 2006.

The Quality Improvement Plan will address all 90-day and six-month deficiencies and non-compliance. This plan includes an action plan with associated costs to cross-reference the start up budget, and the FY 2007 grant application. The FY 2007 Grant Application will be submitted on Aug. 9, 2006.”

– Dr. Tommy Lewis  
Superintendent of Schools  
Department of Diné Education  
928.871.7617